

**Information about the Social Security Offset Provision in Illinois**  
*Prepared by Nancy Solomon, nancy@nancysolomon.net 773-262-8070. June 20, 2013*

**What is the Social Security Offset?**

- In 1980 the U.S. Dept. of Labor gave individual states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories the OPTION of taking social security benefits into account when computing unemployment payments.
- More than 20 states, DC and the U.S. territories chose the offset. All have repealed it --- except Illinois and Louisiana.

**The Illinois 50% Offset Formula**

- In Illinois, one-half of an older worker's weekly social security payment is deducted from his or her weekly unemployment payment.

**How the Offset Affects Older Workers in Illinois**

- More than 17,000 workers in Illinois are affected by the social security offset.
- Some receive ZERO unemployment payments.
- Reduced unemployment payments create a financial hardship during an already difficult time.
- It usually takes older workers at least two times longer than younger workers to find new employment.

**The Social Security Offset is State-Supported Age Discrimination**

- Employers pay into the employment fund for every eligible worker regardless of the worker's age.
- Employers don't get a discount for older workers.
- Older workers should receive their full unemployment payments regardless of their age.

**Information for the Social Security Retirement Pay Task Force**

- The information from the U.S. Dept. of Labor task force members received on May 7 stated -- incorrectly -- that the Virgin Islands, South Dakota and Minnesota had not repealed the offset. They had; Minnesota's repeal has conditions. The Dept. of Labor has been notified.
- Legislation to repeal the offset has been introduced to the Illinois General Assembly every year since 2002. None of them made it through the agreed bill process to the legislature floor for debate and decision.
- There were more than 40 co-signers on the bipartisan offset repeal legislation in the Illinois House and Senate in 2011. Instead of allowing the legislation to move forward, the Social Security Retirement Pay Task Force was formed -- delaying offset repeal legislation for at least one more year.
- Because the task force didn't meet until 2012 as instructed, action on offset repeal legislation has been delayed yet another year.

**Lobbyists Control the Agreed Bill Process**

- The agreed bill process is an Illinois invention that controls which unemployment and workers compensation bills will be allowed to be presented to the legislature for debate and decision.
- Over time, lobbyists from labor and business have come to dominate the agreed bill process, often meeting privately without any legislators present.
- Labor decided to withdraw its opposition to offset repeal in 2011.
- Business continues to oppose offset repeal, insisting that it will cause an increase in employment taxes.
- Offset repeal has NEVER caused an increase in employment taxes.

**Offset Task Force Meetings Concerns**

- The members of the Social Security Retirement Pay Task Force were supposed to be appointed in 2012, hold at least three public hearings and submit recommendations to the legislature in December 2012.
- The last task force members were finally appointed in 2013, delaying action for another year.
- The May 7, 2013, meeting was surprisingly labeled the first public hearing. There were no public comments.
- Only state legislators can repeal the offset. However, the only state legislator able to attend the May 7 meeting was Representative Kelly Cassidy, the sponsor of the offset repeal bill, HB3042.
- The second meeting for June 20 was posted June 18 under News and Announcements on the IDES website. It was not posted on the IDES Events and Workshops calendar.

# Help for Unemployed South Dakotans 65+

from: AARP South Dakota, November 8, 2011

Unemployed South Dakotans who also receive Social Security benefits are now seeing bigger unemployment checks thanks to a measure which passed during South Dakota's 2006 legislative session.

HB 1197 passed in 2006 eliminating the Social Security Unemployment Offset which ended the discriminatory practice of providing reduced unemployment benefits to laid-off workers age 65 and older who also receive Social Security. However, the measure didn't take effect until the state's Unemployment Trust Fund reached \$30 million. The fund reached \$30 million at the end of the third quarter just this year, and unemployed workers who also receive Social Security started seeing an increase in their unemployment benefits October 1.

"This has been a long time coming," said Sam Wilson, associate state director for advocacy for AARP South Dakota. "AARP strongly supported this measure in 2006, and we're pleased it's now in place and helping older workers in South Dakota facing unemployment in a tough job market."

Until the measure passed in 2006, South Dakota was one of just a handful of states in which older workers received unemployment benefits at a lower rate simply because they also received Social Security.

"We know older workers experience the same financial hardships that younger workers do. AARP supported eliminating the offset to ensure that both older and younger workers receive equal benefits for work on the job," said Wilson.

"Employers pay the exact same amount of taxes for a worker over the age of 65 as they do for a worker younger than 65. Older employees work side by side younger workers all throughout our workplaces and they should have the same benefits as younger workers if they are laid off the job involuntarily."

"Older workers are becoming an increasingly important segment of our workforce. As the population ages, older workers will have to assume many traditional roles and responsibilities in the workplace that were often occupied by younger workers," says Wilson. "As they fill these jobs and perform the same tasks as their younger counterparts, it is important to recognize their contributions and assist them in transitioning between jobs in the same we do for younger workers."

More and more, seniors are working full-time well beyond when they had originally planned to retire. Wilson says with the average Social Security beneficiary receiving approximately \$1100 a month, older workers are staying in the work force because they want to, but in many cases, because they need to in order to supplement their income.

“People are working well past 65, 70, or even 75 years of age just to cover basic needs. In these challenging economic conditions older workers are subject to the same job losses younger workers experience every day in the workforce,” he said.

According a recent report by the AARP Public Policy Institute, nationwide nearly 2.1 million people age 55 and older were unemployed in August. And the average duration of unemployment for job seekers aged 55 and older was about one year.

## A little-known, but very powerful process

Wednesday, Aug 17, 2011

Rich Miller, Capital Fax

\* Eric Zorn had never heard of the Statehouse's agreed bill process until he read a letter to the editor. So, he checked into it...

Q. Is it truly "little-known"?

A. Not in Springfield's halls of power or among the business and labor interests that participate in it. When I ran portions of Gallo's letter by an assortment of legislators, aides and interest-group officials, many took issue with the characterization. After all, they pointed out, the process has been used routinely for some 30 years, mostly to mediate unemployment, worker's compensation and other issues in which business and labor interests are in conflict.

On the other hand, the term "agreed-bill process" has only appeared in five Tribune news stories about state government in the last quarter century. And when I asked my sources where and when these stakeholder meetings take place and who, exactly, is invited to participate, the answer was usually vague.

Five times in twenty-five years? Wow. I checked my subscriber archives and found 14 exact phrase matches in the past 18 months. But, that's my thing, writing about stuff that everybody else in the media ignores.

The process has been used for decades to make sure that neither side gets an unfair advantage in any changes to unemployment insurance and workers' compensation laws. Labor, business and other stakeholders like local governments and doctors and hospitals (in the case of workers' comp) all effectively have veto power over everybody else's proposals.

People once thought the process worked well, until the last workers' comp agreed bill process produced a badly flawed law that skyrocketed costs here. The system was abandoned this year and a bill was run that was hotly opposed by the docs and hospitals and had lukewarm backing by some business and most of labor. But the system is still in place for unemployment insurance. Whether that'll last is anybody's guess. The state's UI system is deep in the red and a fix is gonna be painful.

\* The subject came up for Eric because of an effort by AARP to repeal a state law that reduces Social Security and disability retirement checks by half when seniors collect unemployment benefits. Illinois is just one of two states with such a law on the books. But because the item is subject to the agreed bill process, it can't move on its own...

Repeal advocates say the offset reduces benefits each year for more than 17,000 Illinois residents over age 62. Opponents say that repeal would cost the strapped state unemployment insurance trust fund some \$55 million annually and argue that hike would increase costs to business.

The proposed repeal has been introduced in Springfield every year since 2002, but despite bipartisan sponsorship, has never even gotten a vote in committee, much less a full floor debate. Repeal supporters contend that it dies at the whim of unelected advocates operating in the shadowy recesses of the agreed-bill process.

# Social Security offset to unemployment insurance unfair to elderly

By MARK BROWN mbrown@suntimes.com December 14, 2011 7:10PM

Ellen J. Levine lost her job last month.

The circumstances were unremarkable.

Her boss told her business was bad, and they had to let her go — after thanking her for the good job she'd done during her three years with the company. There's been a lot of that going around. Levine talked her supervisor into paying one week's severance.

All that was upsetting, of course, but it wasn't until Levine went to apply for unemployment insurance that she got mad.

That's when the Illinois Department of Employment Security informed Levine that instead of the normal unemployment compensation benefit of \$234 per week she was expecting to receive, she was entitled to only \$70 weekly.

Under Illinois law, she learned, unemployment benefits are reduced when the recipient collects Social Security, a Catch-22 that takes thousands of working seniors in this state by surprise every year.

Levine, 71, of Niles, has been drawing Social Security for about six years now, benefits to which she was entitled after a lifetime in the work force.

Like many older Americans, Levine can't pay the bills on her \$1,200 per month from Social Security, and the low-wage jobs she held her entire life never allowed her to save anything, let alone produce a pension.

She needs to keep working as long as she can. And while she's looking for the next job, she needs her unemployment benefits.

Receiving \$70 a week — \$60 after withholding — isn't going to keep the wolf from the door of her studio apartment.

Mark, I have to tell you I am feisty," Levine told me by way of introduction Wednesday to her budding personal crusade to repeal the law that makes this so.

I am planning a campaign as aggressive as it possibly can be," she said.

While this was the first time we had spoken, I think it's only fair to warn all the legislators who have wrestled with this issue over the past decade — and the business groups that have worked to block any changes — that Levine could be a game changer.

You see, she worked most of her life in health care billing and collections, and my quick appraisal is that she's exactly the type of junkyard dog that occupation breeds — the kind who won't take no for an answer.

She demands to know why Illinois is one of only two states in the nation that haven't already taken steps to repeal the Social Security offset against unemployment benefits. Louisiana is the other.

The short answer is that it would cost money to pay the additional benefit — an estimated \$50 million for this year — money that our severely underfunded unemployment insurance trust fund does not have. Paying a full benefit to unemployed seniors on Social Security would require either an increase in the taxes paid into the fund by employers or a reduction in benefits elsewhere.

But Ryan Gruenenfelder of AARP Illinois, which has worked this issue for years, said business groups opposed repealing the Social Security offset even when the unemployment trust fund was healthy before the recession. So there is no short answer.

I say the real answer is that the 17,500 people in Illinois who were affected by this wrinkle are unable to holler nearly as loud in Springfield as the big companies who this week wrangled hundreds of millions of dollars in tax breaks out of the Legislature.

Maybe Ellen Levine can change that. Her voice is still quite strong.

Levine, who was never married and therefore "never got anybody's life insurance," said she's also never been out of work longer than six months. But she said she's finding it tough out there right now. "It's such a recession out there, no matter what the newspapers say," she said. "It's fierce. It's brutal."

Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago), who sponsored a bill to repeal the Social Security offset, calls the current law "highly discriminatory" against the elderly.

Levine her bill failed to advance, she said she was heartened that business and labor negotiators agreed to create a task force to study how to pay for giving individuals like Levine a full benefit. The task force is supposed to report back by Dec. 31, 2012.

Fair warning: that's not going to satisfy Ellen Levine. Time to pay up.

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# The Change For Social Justice

WHY ARE WE STILL DENYING ILLINOIS WORKERS THEIR MAXIMUM UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS WHEN THEY ARE LAID OFF ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR OR COLLECTING SOCIAL SECURITY? THIS IS FOR ONE THING ANOTHER FORM OF AGE DISCRIMINATION. LOUISIANA AND ILLINOIS ARE THE ONLY STATES NEVER TO REPEAL THIS LAW? REMEMBER, AT THIS PERIOD IN TIME, THE "BOOMERS" ARE RETIRING AND UNEXPECTEDLY LOSING THEIR JOBS. WE CONTINUE TO PERMANENTLY ENLARGING THE WORKING CLASS IN THIS COUNTRY.

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT!

### NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM THE FRONT

- [BILL STATUS OF HB 95 97TH IL GENERAL ASSEMBLY](#)
- [BILL STATUS OF SB 444 97TH IL GENERAL ASSEMBLY](#)
- [TEST YOUR SOCIAL STUDY SKILLS!](#)
- [WHAT THEY DIDN'T TEACH YOU IN CIVICS CLASS](#)

### IT DOESN'T PAY TO GET OLD IN ILLINOIS

AT 11:25 AM NO COMMENTS

### Social Security Offset to Unemployment Insurance Unfair to Elderly

[HTTP://WWW.SUNTIMES.COM/NEWS/BROWN/INDEX.HTML](http://www.suntimes.com/news/brown/index.html)

AT 11:25 AM NO COMMENTS

### BILL KNIGHT: Social Security Should Not Count Against Jobless Benefits!

[HTTP://WWW.PEKINTIMES.COM/OPINIONS/COLUMNISTS/X462562493/SS-SHOULDN'T-COUNT-AGAINST-JOBLESS-BENEFITS](http://www.pekintimes.com/opinions/columnists/x462562493/SS-SHOULDN'T-COUNT-AGAINST-JOBLESS-BENEFITS)

Thank you Bill for your article on the repeal of this Bill.

AT 11:37 AM 1 COMMENT

ALTHOUGH STUNNED TO FIND WHEN I APPLIED FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AFTER BEING LAID OFF (PRACTICAL THING TO DO, RIGHT?) I FOUND THROUGH THE

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### And What All This Means To Us

IF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOLLOWED THE RULES, YES THIS CHART DESCRIBES THE OFFICIAL PROCESS AS REQUIRED BY STATE STATUTE FOR HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW. THIS CHART DESCRIBES HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN IT THE MOST BASIC FORM. UNLESS A BILL IS NOT THE LEAST BIT CONTROVERSIAL, THERE IS ALWAYS A LOT MORE TO THE PROCESS THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT AND THAT IS NOT WRITTEN IN STATUTE OR RULE. PEOPLE ONLY SEE THESE OTHER THINGS IF THEY ARE IN THE CAPITOL ACTUALLY TRYING TO GET A BILL PASSED.

THE AGREED BILL PROCESS IS ONE OF THOSE THAT IS NOT PART OF THE OFFICIAL PROCESS AND DOES NOT BELONG ON THIS CHART. IF IT WOULD GO ANYWHERE, IT WOULD BE PLACED RIGHT AFTER THE "READ 1ST TIME" BUBBLE.

YES, I THINK IT WOULD BE PERFECTLY FINE TO PUT A LINK TO THIS CHART ON THE BLOG.

YES, I BELIEVE I EXPLAINED IN MY LAST EMAIL HOW THE AGREED BILL PROCESS WORKS. THE GOVERNOR, SPEAKER AND SENATE PRESIDENT ALL FOLLOW THE PROCESS AND ENSURE UNEMPLOYMENT AND WORKER'S COMP BILLS GO TO THE AGREED BILL PROCESS BEFORE THEY ALLOW THEM TO MOVE FORWARD IN THEIR RESPECTIVE



APPLICATION PROCESS, IF I RECEIVED OR WOULD RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY, THE UNEMPLOYMENT AMOUNT I WAS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE WOULD BE REDUCED BY OVER HALF BECAUSE I ALSO QUALIFIED FOR SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS.

WHY WOULD SUCH A CONNECTION NEED TO BE JUSTIFIED AND MADE LAW? ARE THE CITIZENS OF ILLINOIS AWARE?

THIS IS CLEARLY AGE DISCRIMINATION. THIS IS GOING TO BE A SERIOUS BURDEN ON THE ELDERLY; OR IS THIS ABOUT THE "BABY BOOMERS" LAY OFF/RETIREMENT DURING THIS PERIOD IN TIME. MY OUTRAGE AS BEING WORKING CLASS IS NOT ONLY FOR MYSELF, I HAVE FAIRED WELL OVER THE YEARS, BUT FOR THE MANY WORKING POOR AND MIDDLE CLASS WHO HAVE WORKED ALL THEIR LIVES AT OR ABOVE MINIMUM WAGE AND ARE FACED WITH UNEXPECTED LAY OFFS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ECONOMY WHERE THEY ARE TRYING TO HOLD ON TO THEIR REAL ESTATE. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION CAN BE THE BRIDGE TO HELP MANY WORKERS FROM GOING UNDER.

CONTACT YOUR ILLINOIS SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES AND LET'S GET THE WORD OUT!!

AT 1:43 PM 4 COMMENTS

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## Illinois Social Security/Unemployment Insurance Offset HB096 & SB144

IN THIS RECORDING, AARP VOLUNTEER NANCY FUNK, ILLINOIS SEN. HEATHER STEANS, REPRESENTATIVES KAREN MAY, MICHAEL MCAULIFFE AND NANCY SULLIVAN DISCUSS THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE ILLINOIS SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSET LAW.

AT 11:50 AM 2 COMMENTS

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### INFORMATION ALERTS

- AGE DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE
- LONG-TERM JOBLESS SEE REDUCTION IN BENEFITS
- IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!
- IS THIS AGE DISCRIMINATION?

CHAMBERS.

YES, WE NEED TO GET AS MANY CO-SPONSORS AS WE CAN TO KEEP THE PRESSURE UP ON LEADERSHIP AND ON BUSINESS AND LABOR GROUPS TO MAKE THIS BILL PASS. EVEN THE GOVERNOR, SPEAKER AND SENATE PRESIDENT CANNOT IGNORE SUCH THINGS AS BI-PARTISAN GROUPS OF 40% OF MEMBERS IN EACH CHAMBER SIGNED ON IN SUPPORT OF A BILL. THE PRESSURE IS MEANT TO GET THE BILLS ON THE AGREED BILL LIST. I DON'T LIKE OR FEEL COMFORTABLE GUIDING IT THAT WAY, BUT THAT'S THE WAY THINGS ARE FOR US IF WE WANT THE BILL TO PASS. YES, WHEN I SAY "LEADERSHIP", I AM REFERRING TO CULLERTON AND MADIGAN.

RYAN GRUENENFELDER AARP ILLINOIS  
ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR - ADVOCACY  
& OUTREACH

...And Justice For All!!



SWIMMING  
THROUGH IT ALL

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## Illinois Inmates Unemployment Benefits Claimed Despite Likely Ineligibility, Audit Reveals

Posted: 07/12/2012 1:55 pm Updated: 07/12/2012 2:07 pm



Are Illinois inmates receiving unemployment checks while behind bars?

The Illinois Department of Employment Security has begun comparing the names of unemployment beneficiaries against inmate records from the state's jails and penitentiaries, and the results were jarring.

Preliminary results from a two-week audit suggest that hundreds of ineligible residents may still be receiving checks, costing the program hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The investigation began after [State Rep. John Cavaletto raised concerns about potential fraud](#) at the Marion County Jail, NBC Chicago reports.

Cavaletto says constituents reported that [inmates were calling the Department of Employment from jail](#) and saying they were unable to find work, according to WGN.

Department spokesman Greg Rivara says that of about 253,000 people currently receiving unemployment benefits statewide, a spot-check found that [during a two-week period, 420 people receiving benefits were behind bars at some point](#), ABC Chicago reports. Depending on the lengths of their sentences, many of those recipients may no longer be eligible for unemployment money, which requires recipients to be available for and actively seeking job opportunities.

People jailed temporarily, particularly on nights and weekends, can still legally receive unemployment benefits, but the agency is concerned that [friends or relatives could be collecting checks for people behind bars](#) who shouldn't legally be eligible, Newsmax reports.

Unemployment payments [average about \\$320 per week, according to the Illinois employment department](#). If all 420 inmates listed as benefit recipients are currently receiving checks, that could cost the state \$134,400 in fraudulent payouts in a single week, draining almost \$7 million in the course of a year.

Cavaletto told the *Chicago Tribune* [he hopes the fraud investigation will help curb unemployment spending](#), giving some much-needed relief to struggling Illinois businesses that contribute to the fund.

"These small businesses that have to pay this unemployment insurance, their insurance should be lesser now," Cavaletto said. "Can you imagine how many dollars we've lost through the years? It's in the millions."

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Wednesday, August 17, 2011

### What they didn't teach you in civics class about how some bills become law

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**Q. Is there really "a little-known process" in Illinois government "in which the legislative leadership and special-interest groups determine which bills are debated and which ones aren't"?**

A. Kinda, yeah.

The allegation comes from [a recent Voice of the People letter](#) by Bob Gallo, the senior state director of AARP, and it refers to the "agreed-bill process," an unofficial, informal negotiation among interested parties that shapes or sometimes kills proposals before they actually reach the General Assembly.

**Q. Is it truly "little-known"?**

A. Not in Springfield's halls of power or among the business and labor interests that participate in it. When I ran portions of Gallo's letter by an assortment of legislators, aides and interest-group officials, many took issue with the characterization. After all, they pointed out, the process has been used routinely for some 30 years, mostly to mediate unemployment, worker's compensation and other issues in which business and labor interests are in conflict.

On the other hand, the term "agreed-bill process" has only appeared in five Tribune news stories about state government in the last quarter century. And when I asked my sources where and when these stakeholder meetings take place and who, exactly, is invited to participate, the answer was usually vague.

**Q. Are the meetings open to the public?**

A. No.

**Q. How and where do they happen?**

A. Gov. Pat Quinn's office sometimes coordinates the meetings. State Sen. Terry Link, D-Waukegan, who is participating in the current round of agreed-bill conversations, said the last gathering took place earlier this month in Chicago, and the next one will be in Springfield Aug. 30.

**Q. Isn't private, back-room legislative dealing an offense against the ideals of an openly operating republic?**

A. That was the implication in Gallo's letter. He was writing about an effort AARP supports to repeal a state law that says senior citizens collecting unemployment benefits must have those benefits reduced by half the amount of their Social Security or disability retirement checks.

Only Illinois and Louisiana still have the so-called Social Security offset provision, which opponents contend is discriminatory and creates a hardship for those trying to supplement funds to which they've already contributed.

**Q. That's an interesting issue.**

A. I thought so. Repeal advocates say the offset reduces benefits each year for more than 17,000 Illinois residents over age 62. Opponents say that repeal would cost the strapped state unemployment insurance trust fund some \$55 million annually and argue that hike would increase costs to business. *(See links below for further analysis of the proposal)*

The proposed repeal has been introduced in Springfield every year since 2002, but despite bipartisan sponsorship, has never even gotten a vote in committee, much less a full floor debate. Repeal supporters contend that it dies at the whim of unelected advocates operating in the shadowy recesses of the agreed-bill process.

**Q. Is it an affront, then, to democracy itself?**

A. Maybe in this case. But in general, many Springfield veterans say, these candid, off-the-record negotiations end up reducing the partisan gridlock and "gotcha!" legislation that kills compromise, thwarts consensus and otherwise gums up the gears.

And, let's be real, it's not like our legislative leaders need some little-known tool to bury legislation. The committee system gives them all the tools they need to stall or kill bills they fear will generate more heat than light and result in awkward roll calls. Further, since the agreed-bill process has no statutory authority, leaders can always go around it and bring forth proposals on which the interested parties have been unable to reach accord.

**Q. Seems like it's time for that to happen with the repeal of the Social Security offset.**

A. I agree

*Update:* -- In a Capitol Fax post headlined [A little-known, but very powerful process](#), Rich Miller sheds more light on agreed-bills. In his comment thread I correct him on one thing: Gallo's letter (below) didn't alert me to the issue with agreed bills; the AARP has been talking to me about the bill and the process since the spring.

can follow this conversation by subscribing to the comment feed for this post.

course they teach you the theory and not necessarily the practice in school. Old hat.

s buried in committee or sabotaged by attaching provisions that render it ineffective? Also old hat.

course, Illinois's government coofers are mighty empty right now. One reason people don't want to repeal this law. How will the state pay the benefits?

ted by: Thomas Radigan | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 06:15 AM

This is awful! What can I do about it?

Support candidates the support responsible, open government.

Which candidates are those?

In Illinois we have two parties: the party in power that claims they are all for reforms, control all the levers of government to make it happen, but only pass superficial reforms that are chock full of loopholes, they are ineffective.

e second party is the party of extremists.

So I should vote for the extremists?

Do you really want candidates in office that favor conceal carry, oppose a woman's right to chose, and want to remove safety nets? Please.

So I shouldn't vote?

Then you will be seen as a cowardly pariah abdicating your civic responsibility.

How about a third party candidate?

Then you are throwing your vote away.

Now I am confused...WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT THIS PROBLEM?

Stop worrying about the system and learn to love it.

sted by: Q and A | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 06:30 AM

ow will the state pay the benefits?

employment benefits come from a fund paid into by employers. If the state doesn't have enough of that money, then there's something fishy going on again.

sted by: JimW | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 08:55 AM

ur Illinois legislators agree that it's ok to discriminate against older workers: Senators Terry Link and John Jones and Representatives Frank Mautino and Ed Sullivan. We need your help to change their minds and be fair. These men have been appointed to the agreed bill process this year. They tell everyone who contacts them and asks them to support repeal of the Social Security offset law that "the state is broke." It's ok, therefore, for Illinois to continue to steal money from older people. Illinois and Louisiana are the ONLY states in the union have not repealed this unfair law. Every other state and territory has repealed it because it clearly discriminates against senior workers. Under the provision, unemployment payments are severely reduced if the recipient also receives Social Security. I'll be happy to provide the contact information for these four legislators. Contact me at nancy dot solomon at att dot net. Tell these men that it's wrong to discriminate against people simply because they're old. Our employers paid the full amount of employment tax for each of us. They didn't get a deduction because we collect Social Security. This is the first time since repeal was first introduced in 2002 that legislators have even been included in the agreed bill process discussions about repeal. Previously, business lobbyists -- with agreement from labor lobbyists -- killed it privately. The Social Security offset provision is just plain wrong.

sted by: Nancy Solomon | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 11:57 AM

set up another email account if you want contact information for the four legislators or want more information about the Social Security offset provision: repeal@att.net

[I don't know the answer, I'll get it for you.

nancy

sted by: Nancy Solomon | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 01:46 PM

o how much does it cost to be part of this "agreed-bill process"? Oh no, I said that wrong. How generous are the members of this secret process with political donations to our poststanding legislators? We all know that there is no "pay to play" in Illinois.

sted by: Tired of Politics | Wednesday, August 17, 2011 at 03:56 PM

n a nation where we've spent the last year arguing about not taxing Americans and corporations to death – I find it hard to believe that the Illinois legislature did not hear this bill and pass it. The Unemployment Offset is a silent tax on senior citizens and a shameful attack on a population left most vulnerable by our ongoing economic recession. To sit behind closed doors and determine that democracy cannot see the light of day is an assault on the people of Illinois for which the Illinois Assembly should be held accountable (at the polls) for not allowing this critical bill to be heard and openly debated. Pastor Martin Niemöller is famous for his poem, And then they came for me ... we all need to speak up regardless of our ages – the truth is, if you don't, eventually they'll come for you.

sted by: Sunshine | Thursday, August 18, 2011 at 09:24 AM

--My unemployment benefits would be \$850/month .... except for social security offset ... cutting me to \$490. This ... after being laid off as employment counselor for seniors in Rockford. Previously, the Republican Congress had cut our wages 35% (July 1). Why are seniors being singled out for punishment in a brutal economy? Why is Illinois one of three states which subtracts our social security from our unemployment benefits?

sted by: Charles Worboys | Thursday, August 18, 2011 at 11:26 AM

uring a social injustice at the comparatively small cost of this issue should never be an issue for even momentary consideration by any legislator. When something is unjust, you fix it. Legislators....just call your mother and ask her if it's right or wrong and then go fix it.

Clearly, the legislature has recognized that this principal is very wrong. In 2009 the legislature passed Public Act 095-1043 to relieve retired state workers from this very Social Security Offset. Why was only one class of people properly treated?

The inequity of this situation is no less than startling.

sted by: hecash | Thursday, August 18, 2011 at 07:52 PM

f a person has paid into Social Security, their benefit should not be reduced for any reason - disability payment, unemployment, working to make ends meet!

ocial Security is not a privilege or right. A person has been contributing all their working life. It is their "due".

Thank you for getting this off the books in IL.

sted by: Pat | Friday, August 19, 2011 at 10:15 AM

The Illinois Offsetting of my Social Security (in calculating and payment of my Unemployment benefits) has greatly affected my family's well being). I can not belief they are even offsetting my benefits! I worked hard for almost 50 years and paid into social securtiy. I don't belief we the unemployed should suffer any loss of UI benefits as a result of having paid in

ing Whitley Illinois Chamber of Commerce President and CEO responded to my query about the Social Security offset repeal proposal:

**I passed your inquiry to the Chamber's staff expert on employment law issues for his insight. He said, "The issue is all about whether a retiree is attached to the workforce. I believe other retirement income is also disqualifying income. There is a cost to the Trust Fund which is already over \$2 billion in the hole. This is not the time to expand benefit payouts."**

l analysis provided by state Sen. Heather Steans, D-Chicago, sponsor of [SB 0144](#) (*The companion bill in the House is Karen May's [HB 1115](#)*)

cial Security Offset recap (.pdf)

[cial Security Offset white paper report](#) (.doc)

velopment of State Laws Regarding Social Security Retirement Offsets From Unemployment Compensation Benefits-2003 to Spring, 2011 (.doc)

[enate Majority Staff Bill Analysis, Feb. 7, 2011](#)

**ig. 3, 2011 letter to Voice of the People from Bob Gallo, senior state director, AARP Illinois:**

reaking an impasse that went on for months, Congress finally voted to allow millions of jobless Americans to receive unemployment benefits.

Unfortunately thousands of Illinoisans will not be able to fully benefit from this opportunity because our state is one of only three in the nation that still has a discriminatory law on its books.

is called the Social Security unemployment offset law.

works like this: If you are a jobless Illinoisan 62 years old or older, and are receiving Social Security benefits, you will see your unemployment benefits denied or reduced by an amount equal to half of your Social Security benefits.

about 16,000 older Illinoisans are the victims of this form of discrimination.

Older individuals on Social Security work because they can't get by just on those benefits. They are struggling to survive in today's economy and pay for basic, everyday costs.

Older unemployed workers also have a much harder time finding a new job than younger workers.

Besides Illinois only Louisiana and Utah have this law, and the Utah General Assembly recently passed a bill repealing it.

The Illinois House of Representatives introduced legislation, sponsored by Rep. Karen May, D-Highland Park, to repeal the law.

But it didn't even get into a committee because of the "agreed bill process," a little-known process in which the legislative leadership and special-interest groups determine which bills are debated and which ones aren't.

As a consequence of this process, thousands of Illinoisans are discriminated against by an outdated law that has been repealed by the immense majority of states.

AARP is calling on older Illinoisans who have been affected by this law to join us in pushing for this issue in Springfield, and to reach out to their state legislators so this outdated and discriminatory law can finally be repealed in the state.

— Bob Gallo, senior state director, AARP Illinois, Chicago

Posted at 12:14:00 AM in COLUMNS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: SB 144 removes social security and disability retirement benefits from the definition of "disqualifying income" for purposes of determining the amount of unemployment benefits a person will receive. Under current law, if a person applying for unemployment receives either social security or disability retirement benefits, half of the amount of those benefits is deducted from the unemployment compensation.

PROPOSERS: AARP, AFL-CIO

Staff Analysis of SB 0144

OPPOSERS: None at this time.

NEUTRAL: None at this time.

BACKGROUND: Senate Bill 144 is identical to Senate Bill 2640 (Steans) of the 96th GA, which was never called for a vote in the Senate Labor Committee. Like SB 2640, SB 144 is an initiative of AARP. According to AARP, current Illinois law which offsets social security from unemployment benefits is discriminatory against older adults. AARP claims that unemployment benefits should not be reduced simply because a person is receiving the social security benefits that they are entitled to. In addition, those older adults are typically working because they cannot survive on only social security benefits.

Last year, the Department of Employment Security reported that removing these offsets from the unemployment benefit calculation would have a yearly impact of \$56 million on the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Senate Bill 2640 was opposed by the following organizations: IL Chamber of Commerce, IL Retail Merchants Assn., NFIB, AFL-CIO, and the IL Manufacturing Association.

Bills affecting the unemployment insurance system traditionally advance through the agreed bills process. Last year, Senate Bill 2460 was not chosen to advance through the agreed bills process.